

“A Biblical Template for Overcoming Temptation,” Part 1 - 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 – August 9th, 2015

- Today's teaching will be part one of a new series I've titled, "A Biblical Template for Overcoming Temptation."
- The Apostle Paul is turning a corner of sorts beginning here in verse 12, in that; he goes from warning them to exhorting them.
- Up to this point Paul has provided the Corinthians with several written warnings in which he used the Israelites as an example.
- It's for this reason that Paul by the Holy Spirit deems it necessary to explain how it is that we can take heed to these warnings.
- More specifically, how we as Christians can overcome and be victorious when we're tempted to repeat the folly of the Israelites.
- Perhaps better said, this is how we can resist the temptation to gratify the lusts of the flesh, and commit sexual immorality, etc.
- While certainly not exhaustive what follows is what I call a "Biblical template for overcoming temptation" hence the teaching title.
- What we have here, woven into the fabric of our text, are practical ways that we as Christians can be victorious when tempted.
- However, before we start looking at these practical ways, I think we should first listen to what Paul is saying in verses 12-13.
- In verse 12 Paul starts out by saying that if we think we are standing firm, we need to be even more careful so that we don't fall.
- In verse 13 He goes on to say that there is no temptation that has overtaken us except that which is common to all of mankind.
- He then says that God is faithful when not if, we're tempted such that He will also provide a way out so we can bear up under it.

1. Never let your guard down

- In the first part of verse 12 we find our first practical way to overcome temptation, and it's that of never letting our guard down.
- Often times we're prone to let our guard down when we think we're standing firm and strong in that particular area in our lives.
- I would suggest that we are the most vulnerable in falling to temptation in the areas of our greatest strengths and successes.

There's a true story that I think best illustrates the importance of not letting your guard down and falling in those areas of great strength and success. It's about a man by the name of Bobby Leach, who was the second person to successfully go over Niagara Falls in a barrel, after Annie Taylor, and the first male to do so, accomplishing the feat on July 25th, 1911. Leach had been a performer with the Barnum and Bailey Circus and was no stranger to stunting. However, according to Wikipedia, in 1926, while on a publicity tour in New Zealand, Leach injured his leg when he slipped on an orange peel (according to some reports, it was a banana peel). The leg became infected, and eventually gangrene necessitated the amputation of the leg. Despite this extreme procedure, Bobby Leach died of complications two months later. The moral of the story is this: one can successfully walk the dangerous tightrope of temptation, or barrel over the huge trials of Niagara Falls, yet, slip on, and fall down, because of something as small as a banana peel.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bobby_Leach

Of this one commentator by the name of Anderson adds: "Some great temptations, which roar around us like Niagara, may leave us unharmed. But a little, insignificant incident may cause our downfall simply because we are not looking for it."

- To me, the best example of letting your guard down is Peter. In some ways he becomes the poster child when it comes to this.
- When you see what led up to Peter denying Jesus three times, no less, you realize that he fell in his greatest area of strength.
- Namely, that of his courage. This is the Peter that had the courage to walk on water and even take on the entire Roman army.
- It's the same Peter that lost his courage when questioned about his association with Jesus. He even swore he didn't know Him.
- If you were to ask me what I thought was the main reason that Peter fell, it would have to be that he had become overconfident.
- Overconfidence gives us a false sense of security, which in turn leads us to let our guard down, and ultimately leads to a fall.

Kindly allow me to share with you a very insightful commentary as it relates to being overconfident. "Given the right circumstances, the best among us is capable of the most unimaginable sins. The sooner we come to grips with this painful truth, the sooner we can be about the business of overcoming temptation. Recognizing our propensity for sin is the first step. The apostle Paul warns us of the danger of overconfidence ...Overconfidence can set us up for a moral failure. The two most common ways are spiritual naiveté and risk taking. The spiritually naive are simply out of touch with their own humanity... When the inevitable temptation comes, it blind-sides [them]. The aftermath devastates them, and they find living with themselves impossible. ...The risk taker, on the other hand, is an adventurer. They are addicted to danger and excitement, and like a moth drawn to a flame; they're drawn to the heat of temptation. They recognize the possibility of a moral failure—in fact, it is that very possibility that excites them. But they believe they can handle it. The risk taker overestimates their moral resolve and usually succumbs to temptation in short order. The spiritually naive and the risk-taking, who have almost nothing in common, share a fatal flaw—overconfidence. And like Peter, who boasted he would never deny Jesus but later found himself weeping bitterly after doing just that, they too have become victims of their own presumption."

- The good news is that when we do let our guard down and fall to temptation, it does not have to be the final word in our lives.
- Though Peter denied Jesus three times Jesus had forgiven and restored Peter when He asked him if He loved Him three times.
- This true for us; when we fall to temptation, like Peter, we too can be on the receiving end of God's forgiveness and restoration.

Psalm 73:26 (NKJV) My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

1 John 1:9 (NIV) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.